"Where there is no vision the people perish"

THE POETRY REVIEW

33 PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON, W.1.

(Telephone: WELBECK 9393)

American Office: 570 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK, 22, U.S.A.

Trade Agents: The Rolls House Publishing Co., 3 Breams Buildings, London, E.C.4.

Advertising Agents: The Aldridge Press, 15 Charterhouse Street, London, E.C.1.

EDITED BY JOHN GAWSWORTH, F.R.S.L.

Vol. XLIII **JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1952** No. 1

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THE HUMAN SITUATION

G. S. FRASER

Between presumption and despair
Climb upon the narrow stair
Of the proper human scope:
Do not hope for safety, but
At the worst remember that
None are saved who lose their hope.

All are lost though, who too much
Presume upon a winning touch
Or imagine that the sky
Looks on the peculiar sins
Of the man who always wins
With a mild forgiving eye.

If the times are bad, of course
They have been, and will be, worse,
Will be, have been better, too,
Yet, though that makes abstract sense,
Practical indifference
Simply will not, will not, do.

For, tossing on a stormy sea,
What is it to you or me
That the sea is sometimes calm?
Thinking of a better time
Or depicting it in rhyme
Will not ease a present harm.

That is true. But truer still
That to purify the will
We must think of evil as
Something other than the weather,
We ourselves have worked together
To make it what it is and was.

Heavy, heavy though it be
Our responsibility
Is a better lot than if
We should set out from the shore

With no sail, and with no oar,
And with no steerboard to our skiff.

Nature is a goddess who
Has no thought for me or you
Other than as vehicles
For the angry seeds of life,
Antagonistic love and strife,
So abundantly she spills.

Yet, of course, we love her still,
Turning from her makes us ill,
Even I who sermonise
Walk (by nature) in her ways,
Count such charms as gild my days
By the fire of female eyes.

And the mere philosopher
Turning in disgust from her,
From this Circe and her cave,
Lacks a certain chthonic fire
Of unsatisfied desire
That makes men fools but makes them brave.

Nature, though, is not enough,
Made of mixed and striving stuff
Like wine that fires and floods our wits.
Pity the wholly sober man;
Also the human drinking can;
Our bouts should have their starts and fits,

And it is fitting, on the whole,
To think as nobly of the soul
As its uneasy case permits,
Its being in a situation
Where someone of superior station
Finds much that jars and much that grits;

Cartesius' ghost-in-the-machine
Expresses crudely what I mean,
Better is Plato's metaphor,
That of a flagon with a thirst
Which, still replenished, cannot burst,
So fast it leaks upon the floor:

For say that we could day and night
Pander to every appetite,
Pack our time with panther hours,
Still that case, as Butler saw,
Rests on an intrinsic flaw—
Their satisfaction is not ours.

And (hedonism no solution
Since it leads to dissolution
Of a central core of strength
In the rational loving will),
Twist and turn we may, but still
Must take ourselves in hand at length.

Nothing could be flatter than
Such a trig account of man
In the plain didactic mode,
Such accounts are needed, though,
If our travelling human show
Is to keep upon the road.

If, when fast cars skid and swerve,
Drivers most must keep their nerve,
We, and now, must most keep ours;
And a statement of that case
Though it lack all lyric grace
Never asked for any flowers.

Yes, the case is what it is.
There is dignity in this,
In choosing to be not deceived.
And it is what it is not.
For we find that, taking thought,
We also act what we conceived.

Language has its uses then
In differentiating men
From less anxious animals,
In transforming outer fate
Into what we think and state
And crumbling down the fatal walls.

Mortal and appetitive
On these ramparts we must live
And seek our narrow safety out,
Safety built on danger, for
All peace implies a hidden war
And all belief is based on doubt.

Men are dying as I write
In the Asiatic night,
Not a word I write will help,
Stanch or soothe a single wound,
Stop a single cannon's round,
Still a single jackal's yelp.

For, buttering no parsnips, and
Neither, on the other hand,
Breaking any bones, words are
Harmless or useless, as you care
To put it; and unwanted where
Mars drives with rage his crashing car—

Words of this sort! Our fever asks
For hollow words from hollow masks
To stimulate to active rage;
The words of headlines or of speeches,
The wind dressed up in coat and breeches
And prancing on the leader page!

But these help less. For nourished by
Rank wind, our poor sheep rot and die,
And our bad shepherds shirk the blame
And change their coats from week to week:
But the more colourings they seek
The more the poison is the same.

For seeking to be quite secure
Against all odds, these fools endure
For their reward, the awful sense
That the vile ogre's mask they face
With hate, too soon will shift its place
Out from the glass, across the fence.

The case for the poetic word
Is not, then, perfectly absurd;
It is against self-righteous rant
And ever-broken promises
That a slow argument like this
May really fill a long-felt want.

I promise nothing. But I say
That we can know a better way
And may have grace to follow it;
We know the worse ways just as well
And there's no sinner in deep hell
On whom we have the right to spit.

We cannot promise, but can pray
For help upon the human way,
From hate and error quiet release:
The calming of our vain desires,
And patience in the purging fires,
And in the human city peace.

POSTSCRIPT

For Sidney Keyes

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

And I have crossed the wilderness in the clutch of night,
Through the clawing of shadows to find the Phoenix bird,
And the bones of my desires are strewn through the wilderness
Where the blood has dripped from the wounds of my walking,
From the stricken flesh of my stumbling . . .
And I have cried in the night
On an escarp of blindness in the midnight of madness,
When the bird, brazen and branded,
Burned on a proud pyre of hoping in a mirage of torment.
But I have found the bird, Phoenix and phantom, flaming in wonder.
And my feet are not vanquished, nor my sight awed with seeing;
For the rocks of the wilderness pass into limbo
As my questing is answered,
As dreams are forgotten in the fire of my cleansing.

FOR THE NEW YEAR

WILFRID THORLEY

Sing, O my soul! the iridescent beam
That shall redeem
Thyself from sloth, the earth from her long doom
Devoid of bloom.

New Hermes, now come I, in flight equipt,
Apocalypt
Of bright days full of blossom, fruit and seed,
And valiant breed

Of men that have within the rainbow conned
The bright beyond
And promise of a dawn to be fulfilled
With sunlight spilled

On all earth's furrows fertile after frost
And holocaust.
For a new world shall rise in hope, forgiven,
Repentant, shriven.

IN SHADOWY MEADS

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

In shadowy meads, by the slow-sliding rivers
  Sing phantom nightingales
Faint arias whose Lethean magic severs
  The soul from earthly dales,
Where still the lilies breathe and the Spring quivers.—
  Miraculous music Orpheus wove
When through the dread peripheries he clove;
  But white Eurydice
  With a faint sigh, when he,
Turning, for ever lost with Hades' grace
  That irrecoverable face,
Gave back to kinder Hermes her small hand,
And with him sank again to the hollow land,
  Away from burning Love

Rapt in her cloudy veils.
For Death had weaned her from ecstatic hours
Wherein the arrow quivers,
And kisses ache, and the asp coils in the flowers.—
In shadowy meads, by the slow-sliding rivers,
Sing phantom nightingales.

THE SCULPTOR

WILFRID GIBSON

The hand that carved this beauty long has perished
And now must be but little else than bone;
And yet the vision, that the sculptor cherished
Within his heart, survives in chiselled stone.

MANHATTAN

WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE

It seems to me that I who sit alone
In January in England by the fire
Know you far better than you know yourself,
You dragon of electrical desire.

For you are still a child playing with toys,
Piling your dizzying towers on tops of towers,
And planting magic seeds that in a night
Grow into regiments of star-crowned flowers.

You build and you unbuild because you must
Indulge your burning fantasies, for you
Express the glory and vanity of dust,
Piercing with spires of diamond the blue.

Crashing Aurora, vast infatuation,
With hopes unrealisable aflame,
Dazzling with splendours of unfulfilled assertion,
Kindling with everlasting beauty and shame! . . .

MANY DESIRE

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

"Many desire, but few or none deserve . . ."
Ah, gallant Raleigh, breasting up through time,
High-riding on the red horizon's curve
With glad bravura of full-crowded rhyme;
All men desire, but who deserving would
Assail the forts of fame if all were known,
How folly cracks the front of hardihood
And each proud foothold gives to crumbling stone?
For who would shape a song to storm a heart
When famous scrolls attest how all songs fail
To win the final sanction of love's art,
The faith, the constancy that never stale?
Many desire, in life and love, but few
Deserve the phantoms they in vain pursue.

THE WOUND

EIRENE COLLIS

We love each other fundamentally,
Deeply, as it were a cleft plant
Living in different gardens,
But of one root.

We love. Yet I cannot stay with you.
Dear you are, and proved true
These long years, but in my heart
I must respect your separateness.

Therefore, I leave you, dearest,
Not in pain, for it was chosen,
It was best. With you, I see too close,
Suffer too much.

And yet we are two stems of one root,
And that torn asunder
So that it bleeds.
And, ah, I cannot staunch the wound.

WEEP NOT FOR LOVE

PHOEBE HESKETH

Weep not for Love—beyond desire
And conscious thought he slumbers on;
Your dreams unblemished in his fire
Survive our human lack and scorn.

Grieve not because your lover finds
His joy beyond your want of him;
Detention kills the thing it binds—
O loose your hold, the flame burns dim!

And let him go; it is not Love
That pleads possession. Hurt and blind,
The stumbling flesh must find that star
Whose burning pinpoint stabs the mind

Till soul and body are interfused,
And vision floods the darkened start.
Weep not because your lover seeks
Truth that informs and lights the heart.

SALVAGE

WRENNE JARMAN

So has our passion ended—in disdain:
  The proud averted head across the street:
  The death at last of all that was so sweet.
O fierce unpitying Fate, that offered pain
To lace a cup already brimmed with bane . . .
  It shall not waste! I'll make it a receipt
  For love, and lay it at the drab world's feet,
To make the old yearn for their youth again,
The young to dream of deeps they may not dare.
  I'll shrine it in a pyx of words, to vie
    With the immortal idylls down the years—
With Phaedra's, Tristan's, Manon's brave despair!
  And the first tear slid from a stranger's eye
    Will expiate our torment and our tears.

THE LAND

" — with gentle hand
Touch, for there is a spirit in the wood."
Wordsworth.

CARLA LANYON LANYON

Do not use the land without reverence,
She does not belong to man. The spirit
Of the land can stifle under immense
Cities. Since only the meek inherit
The earth, treat her with awe and with honour.
There are other creatures who inhabit
Her; in burrow, lair, nest built upon her,
The otter, the wild swan and the rabbit.

The land burgeons for those hands that love her,
Gives great Autumn oaks, little Spring hazel,
Nurses the valley with a clean river,
Strews daffodils for one man's appraisal;
Feeds quiet cattle, hides the violet
Till a child's discovery, stills her powerful
Storm and flood, brings chaffinch song to sunset
And slow fruitful silences at nightfall.

Ask her, do not snatch from her; the land likes
Slow purposes, but where man defaces
For quick gain, there her angry spirit strikes,
There come the deserts, the stoney places.
Who am I to fell the tree, to plaster
The moor with slab concrete? Who gave me leave
To mine and burn? I am not the master
I am the servant. Mighty land, forgive.

ALLEGORY

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

As leopards that in the dappled forests dwell,
Tawny and mottled as lilies in October,
On whose smooth coats eternally there fall
Shadows of primaeval forests cold;

As tigers, agate-eyed, banded with gold,
Yawning with mask-like faces, treading on silence,
Whittled from amber, ribboned with sultry shadow,
Whose voices clang amongst the iron-blue hills;

As lions, whose immense and noble heads
Blunted with pride, are saffron like ebbing fogs
That seep in silence over the frost-bound city,
Move silently, consumed by love and pity;

So He, the Leopard and the Lion waits
Or as the Tiger springs. O then, surrender
Without a cry to all His force and beauty
My soul, as at the quiet pool the deer

Fearless, with unreflecting eye, awaits
The onslaught, and without a murmur falls.
Bitter the moment of such dissolution
When Love consumes, yet by its pain, gives all.

FROM JULIAN OF EGYPT

(Byzantine Poet of the Sixth Century, A.D.)

Translated by JACK LINDSAY

Kinyras, bowed by fifty years of toil,
Has brought the Nymphs this rotten net at last.
The mesh no longer at his shaky cast
Runs out and bellies as the lines uncoil.
Accept it, Nymphs. Aye, it's a paltry thing,
But show no scorn. It's all he has to bring.

BIRTHDAY SONG

For Sarah Dorothy Carpenter

RANDALL SWINGLER

Little year, little one, lie low
  While well you may
  Till the storm still.
Your mother's arm

Shall be the warm
Equator of your world
And you shall grow
Within a wilderness of undismay
Though a wild universe of meteors, whirled
Among the slowing stars
Clash, cool, and fall
In ashy flakes like snow, and all
The sands of Iona sift the powdered shell
Of smashed Time's singing whorl!

Lie low, lie low
In the closed ring
Of garden love, and learn
Man's one eternal
Dream of union
From that phosphor glow
Which is your father's vehemence
Your mother's calm—
Circle of sun and moon
In whose magnetic field
Your earth is born
And burgeons, and in time
Puts forth its own
Its different yield.

Lie low for now, lie low!
The time will come
To leave the orchard playground
And the goblin stream,
To leap beyond
The margin of your parents' dream:
When you'll look back upon
Our awkward words
And wonder why
Men were divided so
And so confused their joy
That the same knotted pang
Which gave you birth
Should beget too
Your new simplicity.

WINTER DUSK

JAMES KIRKUP

This day-long fire with that winter sun
Sinks in a hearth of black-barred clouds.
Darkness begins to enter through the window
Like a growing tree whose boughs
Are lowered nightly with a summer's weight of leaves.

As branches penetrate and flow
Into each corner of the winter room,
Like fingers feeling everywhere for hidden hands
The lined leaves fill their palms of night
With dim flambeaux that barely light the gloom,

But place themselves before the intersecting
Mirrors of the memory, into whose contemplations
The tree grows on, till roots and branches and illuminations
Meet and intermingle in the airy glass, like fingers
Linked and pressed upon the darkening eyes

Of time, through which the fire pierces
Quietly as starlight through these winter skies.

MINERS

VERNON SCANNELL

You will not find them in the easy street
At the gate of the comfortable house
Which stands, holding the hand of the small neat
Garage, like father and son, proud of face
As their owners; you will not see them ever
Riding in taxis or lying in clover.

Nor at your corner where the arching tree
Drips with the melting yellow of laburnum;
You will not see them chatting over tea
On laundered lawns: their food is work—each crumb
The measure of an hour's numb labour:
They pay the price for all you calmly savour.

They do not wander where the flowering ladies
Walk the gay tight-rope of a dangerous charm,
But hammer out the path to Friday's pay
Through limbos of jagged darkness where no warm
And languid August strays. To brief paradise
The cagefuls of black Lucifers humbly rise.

Such melancholy in their minstrel's eyes;
They breathe the daytime of the brilliant night
And walk upright beneath an April of stars:
But though love waits to wash them white
The cage descends to-morrow. Their midnight days
Are your delight: wonder and give them praise.

PURSUIT OF USELESS STUDIES

ARTHUR CADDICK

Always, always from the Middle Sea,
The cadenced voice of Virgil and the march
Of Rome's steel legions of the intellect.

When I was a boy, I fell in love
With Latin. Nasty little prig,
No doubt, loving a dead language,
But, in the main, I don't regret my passion.

To prick flatulent balloons of sentiment
With one quick sword of sense:
To pull the cotton-wool of words from oratory,
And spot the lie sophistical
In falsehood's polished pantomime:
To brush component parts aside
And trace the whole—
These were the gifts my dead love had to offer,
And always, always from the Middle Sea,
The subtle voice of Ovid, and the song
Of Horace to his sweetly-spoken Lalage.

But loving a ghost has its disadvantages.
She asked and took a tribute and a toll
Of indefinables.

I have missed something.
The molten faith which whirls a man through life
Convinced forever of his righteousness—
That must be very solacing to the soul,
If not to those who try to quench the burning.
I have side-tracked faith and yet escaped
The last frigidities of thought.
Though brain may chill me when I melt to feeling,
My heart still warms me when I try to think.
This is the temperamental equipoise
Which cheats the mind yet makes the flesh seem folly.

All this is very clear to me at times,
Especially at sundown, when the mists
Rise from the stifled day and leave the hills,
And I can see Cornwall damply set out,
Gates that don't fit and foolish blind corners,
And a confused dilapidation
Of Celtic untidiness. Would that Rome
Had put this landscape straight or would I were
Walking an Italianate garden
Punctuated with cypresses.

A LETTER TO JOHN BAYLISS ON HIS POEM "YOUNGER POETS"

ROBERT GREACEN

Dear Jack, I'm sorry I can't quite agree
With all your views on modern poetry.
If we the younger poets deprecate
(Adding our voices to the shrill debate)
We scorn our worthy selves. For good or ill
I must insist *we're* younger poets still!
This is no poet's world, I do admit,
Lacking in charity, good sense and wit,
But don't you think, then, that it's up to us
To chart a way through panic, fret and fuss;
Damn the vicious and ignore the coterie,
And mint our own bright coins of poetry?
This comes sincerely (with wish in season)
From your fellow-poet, Robert Greacen.

FIFTEEN NEW POEMS

By LIONEL JOHNSON

The Poetry Review is indebted to Mr. Iain Fletcher for the opportunity of publishing the remaining fourteen poems from his Henn MS. of unprinted Johnson juvenilia, and to him, and the Trustees of the British Museum, for a copy of the newly-transcribed Add. MSS 46363, here entitled *An Invitation to Campbell Dodgson.*

All these verses will later appear in Mr. Fletcher's edition, *The Complete Poems of Lionel Johnson,* shortly appearing with The Richards Press; they were written between 1884 and 1887, when Johnson was between the ages of 17 and 19, and at Winchester College.

FROM THE HENN MS.

2

Now is the crown of the Passion;
A gloom on the head of Spring.
Alone from church in the cold air
With plovers in wailful fashion
Crying about me, shivering
I walk from the lights of Mold: a blare
Of brass bands sounds in the thin, pure chill
Of this night in April: afar some gleams
From lonely starlight pierce the clear darkness: dreams
Flit over the dull, still way, and will not kill
The thought and sight of the eyes that the gray-walled city
Gave to mine own to drink, as a far caught fire
The goal of a traveller's desire.
These have no pity
These troubled gusts of this Passion week's pale night,
These have no pity.
Is this quite nothing? a flash, a moment of light
Won under skies of blue in the southern town?
Is this not all? Yea, thorny crown
And purple robe and rods beating the face,
And death of God: I seek not to displace
The glory of that passion: but in vain
Thrills through this night that high perpetual pain,
For I am passion-struck: ah, from this thin
Wan radiance of Friday smiles that sin
It were so fair to win;
So fair to die therein?
But the lone plovers' cry and one bright star
May voice my passion whither angels are
And hands of pity.

4

To walk with him in the lane of May,
Were it not well?

To drink the glory of perfect day,
In a new, sweet way,
While our hearts should tell
The thing that we two should know so well!
But afar in this north of Wales
The wind chills and wails
While I shiver alone in a desolate air
And the eyes that I love are otherwhere.

5

Oh eyes of pitiful beauty
And infinite love!
Oh eyes that smile and lighten above
My heart that can own no duty
Save merely to catch one glance of your endless light,
And merge its rapture into the starry night!
Eyes not mine, not mine in the sight of a friend
For you alone spoke, despite your silent lips
But, oh eyes, your look had a magic to glance eclipse
On the stars of night; to stir passion without an end.

7

Passionate fragrance of hyacinth bloom
Through the still calm o' the night
Shot to the depth of the gathered gloom
A scent, a sound, a light;
Ideally with thought of an endless land
Hid in this triune power,
A beautiful scorn that the soul may understand,
The wordless oracle sweet in the breathing flower—
A passion of infinite glory, of vision pent
In the sight and touch of a flower,
Where lies the land of the light, the sound, the scent,
The land of one hour?
Or must the urge at the heart of a love-thrilled soul
Find its supreme fruition here, where the hours
Fall past to death and under death's control
Faint oracles are fair in passionate flowers?
Is love the thought of love? and love's desire
Alone, the whole of love? Is love no higher?
Yea, through all chance and change, is love no nigher?

9

Coldly peers the morning star
Far away from me: and far
Gleams of sunlight coldly fill
Glimpses over the far hill
Where the night is waning: light
Straggles through the infinite
Slopes of sky: and with dull sight
Waking I may look upon
Coming day and night not gone.
Breaking gradually along

The long line of dusk, among
Chilly lapses of gray cloud
Steals the sun: and a new day,
Daughter of gray yesterday,
Lives upon this land of Wales
When all sunlight struggling fails.
In the south a gray built town
Wearing for her beauty's crown
Downs adream with thyme-sweet breath
Where a light air wandereth,
Lieth beautiful: and I
Underneath this holy sky
Wander through that hilly street
Out where limes grow summer-sweet.
Down their ways a grandeur smiles
From the great cathedral, whiles
Red-tiled housetops glow around
Over the soft holy ground.
There the pleasant summer light
Gently lingers into night
Fair with stars, when sleep ensteeps
The sweet city, and she sleeps.
But the dawn is dead: and rain
Slants over the hills again
Here in Wales: and it is cold.

10

Sweet eyes afire with light
Adream with tears:
On you will fall a night
On you fall fears:
Yet would I suffer gladly if I might,
Your hidden years.

Will not you smile on me,
For so much love?
Ah, shall it ever be
That I may move
Your light of love to lighten even me
With all your love?

11

Love in the solemn chilliness of April rain,
Among fresh greening leaves at dusk of evening;
Love in the call of air-washed rooks; love in this lane
Muddy beneath my feet;—here is not love most vain,
Though with strange summer thoughts some birds would ever sing?

Is my love any love? A flash of glorious eyes,
A wilder gleam of sea beyond the dusty ways,
Is this love love indeed? Ah, these gray shadowed skies
All the cold, all the rain, each fickle false sunrise
Cry to me timeless love knoweth nor years nor days.

12

Meseemed along a hidden lane
In melancholy spring
We walked amid the breath of violets;
And as we walked, far bells began to ring
Sweetly: whereat a sudden pang of pain
Smote us, and left me weak with strange regrets.

And now I walk alone: one violet
Was sweet a while ago;
And what has been, I know not: but I know
That here mine eyes are wet, and the leaves wet:
And deep bells toll and pause and toll again:
Wherefore I walk alone along this lane.

15

Dead to you,
Dead to your light,
Quick to a hopeless night
Just broken through
By casual eyes staring a pitiless wonder
By horrid sprites lurking above and under
The folded mist,
Ah, eyes whose depths an angel smile hath kissed,
That hour they lighten thus, if you be gone,
I must be dead indeed—if you be gone,
Unlighted, left to die away alone.

16

They lighted mine a little while:
Out from their unvexed seas
Rippled a little smile
And my thought carolled into cadences:
That hour the air was fairer,
That hour the March winds lighter:
While now these rains are rarer
While now this April brighter
For the joy of that low laughter
And its memory laughing after.

17

High in glory above the sun
Stands the city not made with hands,
Where Love makes merry for new hearts won,
For Love triumphant in many lands;
There his palace is fairly pearled;
There his throne is of royal gold;
But I have more in this lower world,
One glance of those eyes, though the hours are cold.
Under the boughs of the bare lime trees
Down in the meads on the daisied grass,
I was strolling at idle ease
Watching the strollers about me pass;
Was it a flash of the new born sun?
Was it a gleam from a bird's quick wing?

Whatever it was, it was love new won
And my heart of a sudden took heart to sing.—
A brother found in the young spring world,
A brother hailed by his golden glance;
The grass grew sweeter, the skies impearled
With a glory of gold, and the buds uncurled
And young birds flew in a circling dance
With no word spoken, with no word thought,
With only the look of our unknown eyes—
But now I have lost what I never sought,
And rain is flooding my gleeful skies.

18

Upon a mountain of immortal pain
Where the stars gleam across the snow,
I lay in dream, and felt the icy rain
Fall on me dreaming so: below
Hoarse nightbirds cried o' the wing, and in wild train
Swept round about the hill of woe.
And when a gray dawn touched my waking brain,
I wondered whether this were so
Indeed: and for cold answer came again
The whirl and play and flow
Of waters bursting from their due domain
Over the meadows lying low.

19

Over the ends of the world on wings of fire
Over the folded night
Flies the soul of my love to my soul's desire
Flies with the stars for light.
Lilies among her hair, and about her feet
Daffodils flash their fire:
From the ends of the world, where world ways meet
Nearing my soul's desire.
"Am I not near thee now,
I, thy love's soul?
Dost thou not hear me now,
Nearing my goal,
Thee, and thy soul's desire?
Are not my lips afire
Kindled for thee?
Will not thy soul aspire
For love of me?
From the calm world limit
I heard thee cry:
Where the seraphim sit
Hovered thy sigh.
Forth of the fair conclave
I flew to thee:
Give me the love I gave,
Give back to me."
"Forth of the ends of the world on wings of fire
Forth of the Seraphim,

Lo thee, I give thee my soul for thy soul's desire
Over the world's far rim
Thou that art flame to the love of my soul's desire:
High over stars and sun
Reigns the salvation of love that can save by fire,
Till the last soul be won."

20

Death's domination yearns, outreaching hands of ice
To grasp the summit of my soul's desire:
Swifter than flieth light, my radiant love outflies
The clutching cold, and bathes in starry fire,
Beyond the shores of night: where aureoled companies
Hail her with songs of light in the sun's choir.

AN INVITATION TO CAMPBELL DODGSON

Come, you from homely Kent,
And I from wilder Flint,
In Cornwall will we pitch our tent,
Where waits good fellowship without stint
To welcome us with hearty
Kind greeting to their party.

Through merry shires at morn
Speed you your iron way:
I sail from Mersey, Southward borne,
Tomorrow at the close of day.
In rime and reason, ocean
Is followed by commotion.

If the good ship go down,
As well may come to pass—,
Though you won't wear your poet's crown,
And I be nowise Lycidas,—
With elegaic verses
See you that decked my hearse is.

Wet dolphins shall not waft
Me at least home again.
How Lycid's friends through tears had laughed
To see him on such slippery craft
Scudding upon the Cornish main,
While Michael stared, neglecting Spain!
Rest no such one sole guilt on
Your verse, my master Milton.

Till Mullion see us both,
Fare you and all yours well.
Good saints, I shall be little loth
To leave the ocean's roll and swell—
Better to live at Mullion
A kitchen maid or scullion.

AUDEN AS MORALIST

W. H. Auden, by Richard Hoggart (Chatto & Windus, 12s. 6d. net)

By HENRY SAVAGE

If a book dealing with poetry may be condemned for being more concerned with moral than with æsthetic values, the book under review must be damned with strong rather than faint praise. Its author, Mr. Richard Hoggart, not only moves to study of the work of Mr. Auden and other contemporary rebels against traditional poetry, he quickens interest in that greatest of all arts, the art of living. Add that he has immersed himself in his subject, analysed it meticulously and, for the most part, ably; that sympathy with it has not biassed him against being critical of defects; and the result is a book that even fastidious readers will be tempted to keep on their shelves.

But it is far from being beyond criticism. On a point of style, an indiscriminate use of the personal pronoun and the first persons singular and plural, though not prominent is to be deprecated even if the failing is of some slight value as a warning against a too ready acceptance of the conclusions. In this latter connection, and more importantly, Mr. Hoggart writes plausibly, and readers merely acquainted with Mr. Auden's work may well be on their guard, seeing that others more versed in it will sometimes be at a loss to know if he is interpreting it or expressing his own point of view. The assumptions in the following passage, for instance, should not lightly be taken for granted:

> Auden cries "Rejoice"—rejoice that by grace we exist and that Love is possible. Otherwise we should be in a sad plight indeed, for only Love can help us in "this modern void". And as the Love of God made Him send His Son to earth to reveal His forgiveness and grace, so now by grace we may be helped in the difficult task of loving.

The anthropomorphism inherent in the above is puzzling in its relation to an earlier statement that "Auden has no trace of anthropomorphism"; to a one-sided definition of it as "the ascription of human qualities to natural objects"; and to Mr. Auden's real position in the matter of religion. When it is considered that anthropomorphism may also—and perhaps more correctly—be defined as the ascription of human qualities to deity, suspicion must remain that Mr. Hoggart has put more of his own beliefs into the interpretation than is warranted.

Mr. Auden himself might hardly subscribe to it. Much as he has been influenced by believers in Christian dogma, and has even, as a layman, recently preached in a Manhattan Episcopalian church, there is no conclusive evidence in his latest book, *The Enchafèd Flood,* or in earlier work, that he is more than very strongly drawn to the conception of a forgiving deity whose love made him send his son to earth. His work to

date, indeed, suggests an attempt to fit together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the pieces being the views of others who have most influenced him, and his hope, the pattern being achieved, that in it he will see his own faith. If, in the poems, is some personal assertion such as "All our knowledge comes to this That existence is enough," it is no more to him than what might be a glimpse of truth believed in until doubt comes again. As to the plays, these, again, go to prove that their author less achieves conviction than aims at it. Nor do the "characters" live. Mr. Hoggart admits that "one cannot be moved by the plight of these people, as people", but he has not sufficiently realised that they are less creations than, as it were, ghosts of influences, different aspects of the views of others.

But it is Mr. Auden's status as a poet, rather than what he believes, which may or may not concern posterity; and not least of the problems involved in any attempt to estimate the value of his poetry is whether art should or should not subserve morality. There seems to be no sound reason why each should not reign as equals in their respective spheres, but Mr. Hoggart, more than leaning to Mr. Auden's view that morality is of primary importance, quotes approvingly the following questionable passage:

> Poetry as a magical means for inducing desirable emotions, and repelling undesirable emotions, in oneself and others, or Poetry as a game of knowledge, a bringer to consciousness, by naming them, of emotions and their wider relationships.
>
> The first view was held by the Greeks, and is now held by M.G.M., Agit-Prop, and the collective public of the world. They are wrong.

Leaving aside the implied sneer at the Greeks (Mr. Auden, as again Mr. Hoggart admits, "is at times merely slick"), which undervalues the Greek genius and alone makes for doubt of the emphatic "They are wrong", the passage is questionable if only for its definition of poetry as "a game of knowledge". Mr. Hoggart defines the word "game" as "a matter of knack and skill", but as it is also an exercise or play for amusement, the impression is created either that Mr. Auden means a pursuit or quest of knowledge or that he not only undervalues poetry, even as a servant of morality, but has also less taste for morality itself than would appear from his published work. By not being more careful in his choice of terms he, at any rate, lays himself open to the suspicion that he is absorbed by moral problems puritanically; that is to say, less from liking them than from fearful respect. Nor is the suspicion dispersed when it is considered that the characteristic is apparently more deeply rooted in English-speaking peoples than in most others; which, incidentally, might partly account for the vogue of both Mr. Auden and Mr. T. S. Eliot in Great Britain and America. Mr. Hoggart opines that Mr. Auden went to America "partly out of disgust with the mess England had made of her affairs in the 'thirties, but more importantly for reasons connected with his art." The precise nature of Mr. Auden's

art is, however, doubtful, and, what is more, he must have known enough of life in New York to sense that it would be even less congenial to him to live there than in England. The inference is therefore strong that he went and stayed less from disgust with English blunders than because America promised a better environment to indulge his zeal for austerity. Austerity, indeed, is writ large over all his work. And more than that. Mr. Hoggart frankly grants that "to many of the intelligentsia to-day Auden seems to have gone sour, depressingly religious, forbiddingly absolutist"—a supposition which may be exaggerated, but he does not succeed when trying hard to refute it. He records, again, a significant admission in *The Sea and the Mirror* that "no artist, not even Eliot, can prevent his work being used as magic, for that is what all of us, highbrow and lowbrow alike, secretly want Art to be." The inference is again strong that the old Adam may preach and practice the hard way, but that his heart is with the literary primrose path, and that he has not seen equanimity in the *via media.*

Whether he is less a poet for the rigorous trait in question is another matter. Marvell was a puritan, though he certainly "wore his rue with a difference", and there is much puritanism in Shakespeare and in several other great English poets. What, at any rate, seems to be true of Mr. Auden is that he is not primarily a poet but uses what poetic gift is his towards achieving a satisfaction that he has sensed that poetry cannot give him. He has himself said that "novel-writing is a greater art than poetry altogether"—though that, perhaps, is a now discarded youthful opinion—and, as Mr. Hoggart yet again admits, "he is finally a moralist, concerned with the problem of human guilt."

Further light on his position as a poet is shed by Mr. Michael Roberts' view that "poetry is here turned to propaganda, but it is propaganda for a theory of life that may release the poet's energies for the writing of pure poetry"; as to which weak apologia Mr. Hoggart rightly says that "the assumptions will not bear close scrutiny." Mr. Roberts may have been aware of the implication that pure poetry is of more importance than propagandist poetry, but he was evidently not aware that the writer of pure poetry will write it willy-nilly, be more interested in it than in any theory of life, and consequently feel no need to devote to propaganda energies to which, so far as he is concerned, pure poetry has first claim. Milton, Blake, and other great poets; Shakespeare, even; were interested in the problem of human guilt, but they used it as one of the many subjects for their art, and it would be absurd to think of them as being primarily either moralists or propagandists. They were, in short by dint of genius, occasional creators of that pure poetry which, unlike moral problems, is not subject to the need of constant revision.

Yet further to the point in question, Mr. Hoggart quotes a note from *New Year Letter* in which "Auden, naming the tribunal which shall judge

him, puts Blake only second to Dante." Apart from the somewhat surprising optimism of the prophecy, the poet in Blake, judging *New Year Letter,* could hardly have approved what the moralist in him might have viewed leniently. The long poem is "a very false gallop of verses" in short clipped lines, as with *Hudibras*; doggerel in brief, which goes on and on hitting at the ear until reading becomes a task which only those would pursue who fervently hope that they will ultimately be compensated. *Hudibras* has survived because it is one of the rare examples of doggerel of genius, and has vital lines which cannot be left out of any dictionary of quotations, but that *New Year Letter* has genius and vitality of that order none but uncritical enthusiasts for Mr. Auden's work would dare to affirm.

Mr. Hoggart states that Mr. Auden's "appeal to the ear is sensitive and skilful", and, naïvely in the same connection, that "we have become a little ashamed to admit our response to the poet as singer"—by "we" meaning, presumably, not everybody but those who undervalue harmony in poetry, and "the poet" not, in this instance, Mr. Auden but poets in general. With the exception of *New Year Letter* and certain other poems, it is true that some of Mr. Auden's work is that of a singer. Unfortunately, however, it is too often marred by obscurities which cannot always be justified on the score of being expressive of obscure ideas or emotions. One lyric in particular, beginning, intelligibly enough, with

> This lunar beauty
> Has no history,
> Is complete and early;

runs on into such mind-torturing ambiguities that Mr. Hoggart, in quoting it as an example in which "Auden's power is most strikingly, because unexpectedly, shown", would have been more considerate of his readers, and perhaps less vaguely explanatory, had he gone on to give something of its bibliography. First published without a title in *Poems, 1930,* and later in *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse,* it must have seemed to its more thoughtful readers "on purpose laid to take the taker mad" until, subsequently, in *Collected Shorter Poems,* for some reason which would be interesting to know, it was entitled *Like a Dream.* Read with that title in mind it is then seen to be indeed like some dreams; that is to say, inconsequential, irrelevant and preposterous. Not that this interpretation of it wholly disposes of doubt whether it was inspired by a dream or by the moon's beauty. It would also be interesting to know why Yeats included it in the Anthology above mentioned. He may have carelessly credited it with some element of magic or incantation. These qualities are at times inherent in pure poetry, but Yeats, though a great poet was not invariably a great judge—as witness certain regrettable revisions in his own earlier lyrics—and until the doubt is resolved, scepticism may be more correct than blind enthusiasm in

tending to conclude that Mr. Auden yielded to his heart's desire to practice magic, and succeeded only in achieving a not unrythmical verbiage.

His poetry, again, is frequently unimaginative in its unconsciousness of our immense debt to the past; an unimaginativeness which also accounts for his having been excessively influenced by his age; in other words, by the events of a very brief period of time. *Spain,* for example, with its contrast between past and present as recurrent motif, impressive as it doubtless was in its day, and still is in parts, fails as a whole for the superficial thought in such passages as

> Yesterday the Sabbath of Witches. But to-day the struggle.

Of this line it need only be said that more knowledge of evil would have told its author that the Sabbath of Witches is always with us.

Far from profound, again, is the thought in

> The stars are dead. The animals will not look.
> We are left alone with our day and the time is short.

That such "poetry" cannot survive is certain. The apparently simple statement that the stars are dead is ambiguous if only for its implication that they were once—as indeed they always are—alive. It may mean either that astrology is no longer to be relied upon or—as with an unimaginative view by Anatole France—that the stars are mere *gouttes de boue.* The further apparently simple statement that the animals will not look is completely incomprehensible, and as to the second, and more obviously egotistical line, we are not left alone with our day who have the past and future, and only in one sense of the word is the time short. Mr. Auden, in the Preface to his *Collected Poems,* states that if he limited the collection "to those poems for which he is honestly grateful, his volume would be too depressingly slim." Honest gratitude is not necessarily accompanied by sound judgement, and fear of depression in this respect should have warned him that quality should come before quantity, and that there may be more honesty in slim than in thick volumes.

It would be unjust to stress demerits and to make no attempt to pay ungrudging tribute to what may seem to be of value in Mr. Auden's work. Many readers, weary of battling with endless obscurities and of the ingenuousness revealed by excess of contempt for human frailty, will probably find pleasure in coming upon an untitled satirical ballad which voices the desires of six cripples, and is delightful for its gargoylesque imagery and subtly witty ribaldry. It invites, also, to an interesting trilateral problem in criticism as being a mingled expression of objective wish-fulfilment—that is to say, as regards the cripples—and subjective in its relation to the author and the readers it pleases. The problem, studied, should throw much light on the nature of satire in general.

Admirable, too, are appreciations of Freud, Yeats, and Henry James, which, if not great poetry as, say, is Swinburne's *Ave atque Vale,* disclose

a warmth of generous feeling oddly, however, at variance with the contempt already mentioned and, in particular, with the vindictiveness of a squib on Housman which Mr. Hoggart cites as an example of "bold succinctness . . . close to good caricature." Given further publicity here, and commented upon to remove any false impressions occasioned by Mr. Hoggart's unfortunate resurrection of it, it runs:

> Deliberately he chose the dry-as-dust
> Kept tears like dirty postcards in a drawer;
> (Food was his public love; his private lust
> Something to do with violence and the poor.)

Such malevolence is certainly not in keeping with the claim in a poem beginning "Sir, no man's enemy, forgiving all," or (again to quote Mr. Hoggart) its author's "acceptance of the Christian presuppositions" through "a process which had begun by the time he left Oxford." It is well known that Housman's character was far from being irreproachable—as to which, many of the greatest poets, Villon, Verlaine and others, would, presumably, come under Mr. Auden's lash—but the epigram conveys absolutely nothing of the truth that Housman was a fine scholar and a poet whose work survives. Nor was his scholarship confined to "dry-as-dust"—a contemptuous term which provides yet another instance of Mr. Auden's unconsciousness of our debt to the past.

Dissimilar temperaments being, perhaps, irreconcilable, lovers of beauty may find it impossible to be rid of prejudice regarding the work of Mr. Auden and others of his kind. There is the stuff of tragedy in the fact that so many gifted authors to-day should be less sensitive to the beauty and mystery of the sensual world than to its harsher and more sordid elements. Mr. Hoggart prophecies that "Auden will write less quixotically when he is emotionally as well as intellectually sure of his beliefs, and meanwhile he will be finding the audience which he now needs—and which needs him." "Quixotically" is hardly the word, but it is possible that Mr. Auden is needed by readers of tendencies akin to his own; though they might be better served by going direct to authors who have influenced him, or, better still, to masters inspired less by books than by Nature. When much of the art and literature of the past forty years or so is reflected upon, it seems more than likely that life as seen by certain "intellectuals" is not life as in itself it really is, and that the plausible expression of superficial and distorted views may have contributed to the extension of prevailing evils. The revolution was doubtless salutary, but it is hard to believe that song and beauty can remain in exile for ever. Their return might be hastened if criticism gives more thought to the question whether the poetry of the period is of that substance which lives.

CONSTANT ZARIAN, TRIPLE EXILE

By LAWRENCE DURRELL

Some account of the writings of Constant Zarian is long overdue—and would no doubt have long since been given had not the general inaccessibility of his writings in the Armenian language left the common reader in Europe with only a slender sheaf of poems and essays in French by which to judge him. Now, in his sixty-third year, however, he is within striking distance of the European reputation which must follow the forthcoming translation of his books into French and German—and as such he commands the attention of the serious reader in England.

But fame—or even for that matter recognition—are matters of indifference to this much-travelled man of letters who now lives quietly on the island of his choice in the Gulf of Naples, happy in the memory of a long life well spent in travel and friendship, in good living and good writing.

Zarian was born in the Caucasus, in the province of Shirvan, which, he says somewhere in a biographical note, was "well-known for its poets, roses, nightingales and its periodical earthquakes." He adds: "So at the very start I absorbed poetry and a certain anxiety from my natal place." Poetry and anxiety! An auspicious conjunction of qualities for a twentieth century man! He attended a local school for some years before his parents, who were people of substance and position, decided to send him to France to be educated.

Paris provided the school, and Brussels the university—but the results of a western education were to be quite unforeseen by his parents. Zarian emerged from his studies as a promising poet. He joined the group of flourishing young Belgian poets who at this time gathered round Emil Verhaeren, and his first essays in poetry marked him as a young man of determined and forcible talent.

By now his writings had reached Russia and the Czarist authorities responded to them by forbidding his return; his disgusted family repudiated him; henceforth poetry was to become both a fatherland and a family. At this time his work in French had already earned a deserved reputation as a writer to be watched. But now came a change.

He had by this time all but forgotten his native language; "only some of my prayers, learned during childhood, clung with obstinacy to me." One night after a memorable conversation with Verhaeren he took, on the advice of the elder poet, the decision to re-learn Armenian, and henceforth only to write in his native tongue. At this time the theories about the "autochthonous artist" were very much in the air, and Verhaeren assured him that however well he wrote in French he would

always remain a *deraciné*, a rootless emigrant in French literature. Why should he not become, although an exile, a mouthpiece for his own people? The artist should accept the responsibilities conferred upon him by the native ties of birth and tongue—and by his stars.

Zarian went to Venice where, on the island of San Lazaro, the monks of the Armenian monastery undertook to teach him his native language and (almost more important) gave him enough work as a translator to enable him to live. In the room, at the very table, where once Byron had started to study Armenian, Zarian undertook this rediscovery of himself. "I realised now," he writes, "that language is simply part of the blood that circulates throughout one's body; one doesn't learn it, but simply discovers it." For several years, absorbed in this self-discovery, he remained in Venice perfecting the instrument which he was henceforth to use.

But it was not enough simply to reclaim the lost power of his native language; as an active and energetic writer with a mission, his duty was to turn his talents towards his own people. But how could he reach them—since he was now a political exile? In 1912 he was to be found in Constantinople, living in the greatest poverty, and gathering round him a group of exiled talents to help him with the foundation of a free literary newspaper written in Armenian. He recognised clearly that a writer's duty is to devote himself to the field of human values and not to waste his talent on ephemeral political polemic. Politics change; values—the true workshop of the poet—have to be perpetually examined and recreated from new points of view. Their basic substance is unchanged however since they deal, not with the temporal condition of man but with his unchanging inner disposition. They have to be reworked in every generation—"as bread is always the same but has to be kneaded and composed afresh every day if it is to be palatable."

But the outbreak of the First World War put an abrupt end to these considerations; the little band of intellectuals was abruptly dispersed. Escaping arrest by the Turks, Zarian crossed the border into Bulgaria and thence made his way to Italy. Here he composed his "Three Mysteries", a pantheistic poem of great force and beauty which, in Italian translation, earned him immediate recognition and which was put to music by Ottorino Respighi.

At the end of the war Zarian returned to Constantinople to continue his literary work, and in 1920 accepted an invitation by the Soviet authorities to return to Armenia with full honours. He was to have a chair founded for him at the University of Erevan. He accepted the invitation and returned. He determined to stay and help the revolutionaries to found their promised Utopia. It took him two years to understand finally the full horror of the system which had been imposed upon his own people. In 1924 he fled.

II

To those who come back, he will tell you, after having fully tasted the fruits of Communism in Russia, Europe seems a strangely unreal thing; and the values of Europe acquire all of a sudden a new perspective. What are all these people talking about, the traveller asks himself, as everywhere around him he sees traces of a moral order, a coherence in values, a *culture* which has been systematically extirpated behind the curtain? The virtues so far outweigh the defects that it seems incredible to him that he himself was once among those sentimental believers who wished for a new Marxist Utopia and the end of capitalism. To those who have the chance fully to compare the two systems the shock is a very profound one. Not only does capitalism offer the worker a far better chance of ameliorating his lot, *but in every way and from every point of view* it is superior to the paltry materialistic inventions of that dated humbug, the Communist: whose politics are based upon a pipe-dream which in turn is based upon a social grudge. It was from this new angle of vision that the disappointed poet saw Europe on his return.

Many people since Zarian have learned the lesson, too; but for him the shock was perhaps greater, since it concerned his own country and his own people. He had always been disposed to listen openly to criticisms of Communism; no doubt he had always agreed the earlier stages were clumsy, crude and mistaken. Nevertheless it offered hopes of equality and justice. But after an exposure to it at first hand he realised with alarm that the system itself did not work (regardless of whether it were to be applied by angels or gangsters). Based on a futile actuary's view of the universe, it laid low every seed of culture and growth that a thousand years of Christian humanism had offered to the Western European. It was the deliberate enemy of the imagination, of love, of every faculty and grace that one could prize as a human being. And here was another paradox; he had expected to find that the Communist state was truly a worker's state and found instead that it was, in the most precise sense of the word, a state run by the failures of Bloomsbury. Marxism was the bin into which every *manqué* poured the talents he could not exercise in the arts and sciences.

To return then, like Lazarus risen from the grave, and to find the currents still running strongly leftward in Europe, was something which made his blood run cold. Fifty years of sentimental agitation, of barren provincial Utopianism, had produced this attitude in public opinion. To read the utterances of a Shaw, a Haldane, after leaving Armenia was almost to despair of the fate of Western Europe as such—for never had so gigantic and palpable a fraud, so hideous a tyranny ever been supported by so many men of apparent distinction and eminence.

Zarian has never ceased to believe in the artist as the responsible factor in human affairs; and the blame for this situation, he laid and still lays at the door of the western artist. The utter *irresponsibility* in human affairs which has characterised the artists of the last fifty years, he often insists, is something that can only be appreciated in all its richness by someone who has enjoyed the fruits of their agitation—a worker's state: at least so Zarian thought when, once more in France, he tried to assemble his ideas of the two years he had passed in his country. He was consumed by anxiety that Europe, with all its remediable faults, should be destroyed by the tyranny he saw approaching in so many seductive guises.

Marxism, he recognised, was itself the enemy, whether in the mild form of humanistic socialism advocated by the sentimental agitators of the west, or in its complete Soviet form; indeed one could only be a stepping stone to the other. What could he do to atone for his mistake? What kind of artist could he become without falling into the camp of the clericals, or the duller ranks of the quasi-reactionaries? How best could he contribute to the twentieth-century symposium?

It was these considerations that were finally to determine the shape and magnitude of the writings which, for the next twenty years and more, were to pour from his pen. It was no conscious choice that made Zarian a classical man—it was the development of a natural style of mind, founded in bitter experience and in a tenacious belief that if man was to be saved from destruction he stood in need of major artists of a new type—*responsible men.* His own task was no longer to reject, to criticise, to whine—but in the deepest sense of the word, to submerge in the swift currents of history and to give their impulse direction and form. "To endure and contribute"—that was the new motto: and he has never deviated by a hairsbreadth from it in his attitude to his work and his people.

He was by now a triple exile: exiled by both Czarist and Bolshevik; and doubly exiled from the current of European thought by his choice of language. After what he had seen he recognised that the Fabians and their followers, though they were striking many a shrewd blow for justice in social affairs, were still hypnotised by the corpus of belief derived out of Marxism. They constituted nothing less than an intellectual fifth column situated at the heart of European life. The very science upon which their belief in a new social order was founded had become obsolete with the relativity principle. There was a real danger that they would succeed in destroying the old culture and finding themselves with nothing to put in its place. Could they not recognise that cultures were born and died like organisms? That they could not be forced and shaped only by the human powers of a fallible logic?

Zarian addressed himself to the social problem not by entering the arena as a man of politics or of science but simply as an artist devoted

to the responsibilities which his country and language had put upon him. He dealt with Soviet Armenia in the way that one would deal with the phenomenon of, say, first love—artistically. His "Impressions of Soviet Life" and "The Co-operative and the Bones of the Mammoth" recreated the atmosphere and flavour of the submerged life that human beings live when their hearts have been conscripted under the flag of the false god, Matter. The emphasis was on the pity and the comedy, and his best effects have some of the simplicity and grotesque humour of Gogol.

For the rest, his work belongs to the main current of European thought, and his books from 1930 onwards were milestones set up along the winding roads of his journeys, both physical and spiritual, in the Europe he had come to love. His "Philosophical Studies" and the two fat "Notebooks" (1946) contain not only his impressions of Spain, Italy and Holland but, in a sense, a study of the philosophic background which makes or unmakes nations; yet these studies were free from a false professionalism in that they were at all points derived, not from abstractions, but from the landscape, wine, food, people and languages he encountered.

He spent the Second World War in America and published there what he regards as his greatest novel, "The Ship Upon the Mountain". So much for the prose of this formidable poet, the appearance of whose prose work has been punctuated through the years by the publication of many books of verse. This year his *Collected Poems* are in the press and contain all the work that he wishes to preserve in this medium.*

"As a classical man," Zarian is fond of saying, "I am either out of date or else I belong to a type of artist who has not yet emerged but whom the future will bring us. The artist who belongs to his people." It is perhaps easier to be this type of artist if one belongs to a small people whose literature is as yet not significant in the way that, say, German or French literature is. Certainly our own native genius seems to be bred out of revolt, out of a refusal to conform or belong (Shelley, Byron, Lawrence, Blake, etc.) It is characteristic also that in English it is the rebels that Zarian most admires . . . Nevertheless he feels that the future will bring us artists who belong without being tame or toothless, without being a Southey or Rogers. "They will not stop being exiles, of course," adds Zarian, "because it seems that one has to be an exile in order to belong to the world." The translation of his work into two European languages will, we believe, qualify him for admission into this class.

* A brief selection from this volume, which has been made and translated by M. Zarian will appear in a future issue.—Ed.

THE POEMS OF KEITH DOUGLAS

REVIEWED BY PHILIP JOHN STEAD

Collected Poems, by Keith Douglas, edited by John Waller and G. S. Fraser (Poetry London, 12s. 6d.)

Keith Douglas was a writer of the same order as T. E. Lawrence or André Malraux; he did not stand apart from the great events of his time, but earnestly and creatively involved himself in them. His record of experience is consummately honest, curiously free from literary attitudes. Nor is it qualified by religious or philosophical allegiances; Douglas had no formula for setting the world to rights or for transmuting present pain into eternal solaces. He is intensely alone with what happens to him and about him. If his verse sometimes resembles that of Auden, with its intimate "this" and its stressed adjectives, it is the merest similarity of manner; there is nothing of Auden's social romanticism or personal obscurities. He escapes the facile incantation and coloured ritual of the poets of his time who took the leisurely, literary path offered by superficial discipleship to Eliot. It was not in Douglas's nature to be a follower. He had an empirical mind, and the concentrative power of a writer who accepts nothing until he is personally assured of its nature and its worth. Without prejudice, without ulterior motive, he applied himself to the simple experience. When Douglas writes of war it is not in the pious hope that war will end war or brighten the future, but directly, as Owen wrote, of the way war really happened to him. He recognized no "duty" as a poet other than the objective of writing "true things, significant things in words each of which works for its place in a line."

It did not take a war to bring Douglas to this anxious economy. His development is temperamental and logical. The poet who wrote of the Western Desert had written of love and happiness and Oxford with similar concentration upon the immediate facts, and from an equally solitary position. He was extremely conscious of human limitations—he saw Man as a spirit, indeed, but a spirit closely dogged by Death and Time, the grand antagonists of all affirmative endeavouring things. If God enters his cosmos, it is as a Lucretian character:

"We must never touch or start our story again;
For God is waiting with unexpended pain . . ."

and in one early poem, *The Creator,* he writes in the mood, and even echoes the tone and rhythm of A. E. Housman. Time is the enemy who appears most often, though, an adversary far more hateful and formidable than the Germans, eating up noble sun-born plans, killing love, climbing like a creeper over the heart, renewing the snake's scales and the spring, but impotent to make individual experience fresh again. Douglas did not

acquiesce in these doings of Time and his accomplice Death or take any romantic delight in enduring them:

"Only between these dangerous two
Let me be nimble, jump and dodge
The unnatural uncles on my track . . ."

That "let me" is a resolution rather than a prayer. He cared too much for the goodness life could hold to acquiesce in its passing.

Some of his poetry, especially of the Oxford period, had a lovely impetuosity, disciplined to graceful precision:

"Three dancers under music's orders stand,
Held by the hand of silence for a moment,
Posing . . ."

He wrote memorably, with handsome conceit, of moonlight and the stars, with fresh apprehension of old themes. His poetry is always admirably concrete; he sets off from clear imagery with perfect confidence. When the time came to contemplate suffering, his style was strong enough to be modified; it did not have to be discarded and made again.

He set down his war with passionate sobriety. "I see no reason to be either musical or sonorous about things at present," he wrote, and his tone is that of the time, his rhythms laconic or stretched to the phrase of actual talk:

"Peter was unfortunately killed by an 88:
It took his leg away, he died in the ambulance.
I saw him crawling on the sand; he said
It's most unfair, they've shot my foot off."

The imagery is keen:

"But by a day's travelling you reach a new world,
The vegetation is of iron
Dead tanks, gun barrels split like celery."

Or: "The steel is torn into fronds
By the lunatic explosive."

The poetry he wrote in his time as a soldier is not all battle poetry, but it is the truer to service life for its treatment of the other themes which enter soldier's minds—the strange loneliness of men who must exist in other people's countries, the memories of love, the tainted, hybrid leave-towns of the Delta, the incomprehensibility of life, the difficulties of going back to England. No poet has recorded war experience more sincerely; very few have been as free from the facilities of emotional rendering.

The present edition of his work supplies a text which the editors have spared no pains to make authoritative, and contains useful biographical information and notes. Read with Douglas's *From Alamein to Zem Zem,* it provides the material from which emerges the promise of a young tragic master, touched as only few writers are, by the spirit of his time.

SHORT REVIEWS

Edmund Blunden: A Selection of his Poetry and Prose. Made by Kenneth Hopkins (Rupert Hart-Davis, 15s.).

Mr. Edmund Blunden occupies an unique position in modern literature by belonging properly to no group or period. He has the child-like charm of isolation, a sensitive but quiet eye, and a will-o'-the-wisp character which makes it difficult for the ordinary reader to pin him down or discover anything but an enigmatic answer to the questions he feels he has a right to ask.

At one time, I imagine, Mr. Kenneth Hopkins felt in making the present selection that now at last he would present Mr. Blunden plain. Unfortunately a colder, more ruthlessly critical eye, was needed to perform this task. Too great a love of his subject has led Mr. Hopkins to provide not a representative anthology, but a collection less interesting though perhaps more intrinsically valuable in that he has aimed to gather together as many as possible of those fugitive pieces that had so far evaded the main corpus or were out of print or had been overshadowed by more brilliant companions. As an introduction, therefore, his anthology does Mr. Blunden a little less than justice; as an addition, however, to the shelves of all good Blundenians who seek no airy answers it is probably invaluable.

Mr. Hopkins disarms all criticism by making clear in his preface that he has made no attempt to assemble "the Best of Blunden". Alas, as a non-Blundenian myself I could have wished that he had attempted this latter feat, even though it meant including the whole of "Undertones of War" (to the exclusion of many fugitive pieces) and also such anthology poems as "Almswomen" and more of the war poems.

As a non-Blundenian indeed I do not feel altogether entitled to write about the present volume; for it should not after all be a stranger's privilege to criticize a family some of whose most prominent members are away from home. But those who, without being fanatics, have approved at times the poems of Edmund Blunden will find something to delight them here in such varying pieces as "Forefathers", "Clare's Ghost" (whose eyes are "lit with a burning deathless discontent."), "Cricket, I Confess" ("O my Relf and Jessop and Hutchings long ago.",) "Transport Up at Ypres", "The Still Hour", "The Midnight Skaters", and an "Incident in Hyde Park, 1803". Similarly "Aftertones", "Fall In, Ghosts", "The Find" and "Miss Warble" will assuredly please admirers of the sincerely youthful yet undramatized chapters of the "Undertones".

The final answer, however, is still to find.

JOHN WALLER.

New Poetic Lamps and Old. An Analysis of the New Movement in Poetry. By Stanton A. Coblentz, (Wings Press, California, $2.)

English Poetry. By Leone Vivante, (Faber, 21s.).

A Short History of English Drama. by B. Ifor Evans, (Staples Press, Ltd., 7s. 6d.).

It is something of a duty, as well as a pleasure, to keep oneself more or less abreast of the excellencies, as well as some absurdities, of the modern American mind. Mr. Coblentz, whose verses we have been reading for years, in this *Review* among others, will help us, a shade unexpectedly, to both.

First citing lovely lightweight Coventry Patmore, Mr. Coblentz contrasts what he stigmatizes as bad verse, and quite entertainingly writes of it:—

"Rhythmically speaking, almost any sentence on anyone's lips will rank side by side with this. Let me for example transpose what I have written:

Rhythmically speaking
Almost any sentence
On anyone's lips
Will rank side by side with this.
Let me, for example,
Transpose what I have written.

This, of course, is not poetry, and has not the rhythm of poetry. Yet most modern verse comes no nearer than this to a poetic rhythm."

But tearing things from context and wilfully mis-parsing is almost too easy! Mr. Coblentz is bitterly biassed against Ezra Pound, Carl Sandburg, T. S. Eliot, Oscar Williams and his other American rivals—more understandably so (out of context) against Ruth Pitter, George Barker, and Auden—his book is full of fairness and unfairness, and at least it stimulates some interest, but on the whole is too biassed to be anything but outmoded.

Our next piece of pretentiousness comes not from America but Italy, albeit launched on an almost insufferably condescending Preface by T. S. Eliot, that tse-tse fly of our English consciousness, stinging it awake to current realities but not creating much.

I confess to having had a strong feeling that, Preface apart, I'd have liked Professor Vivante better in Italian; that I was not interested in any preconceived theories, English or foreign, to which quotations can always be adapted (even Mr. Eliot warns against this, poems "called upon to dignify a dubious theory"), but in hearing in all their freshness an intelligent Italian's reactions to English poetry: this was not to say a word against the, meticulous and lamentably anonymous, translation—until deeper research showed that it is Professor Vivante's own English standing like a veil between me and his thought. Had he only written

in Benedetto Croce's language (ancient favourite of mine), I felt how delighted I would have been to study his sensitive reactions . . .

And what is the great theory which, The Master warns us, grew up out of, was not imposed upon, Vivante's reading of English poetry? The more one reads the more one feels that it would probably have come out easily in a luminous phrase of the Italian but was strangled in the midwifery of translation: roughly, that there is an Indefinable Something about the Poet as Creator of New Truth which stamps all genuine poetry. Many of us have long believed this, many of us believe that poetry's mere creation unpublished is of itself a value in the material world.

Interesting theory, interesting Bergson plus Croce plus Giovanni Gentile, but little evidence, I feel, for an understanding of English poetry, and precious little return for a guinea.

How pleasant to turn to a work both scholarly and profound, and light and stimulating, in which Professor Ifor Evans has worthily sistered his *Short History of English Literature* by an admirable exegesis, literally a drawing out-of-itself, of our Drama . . . Its genesis via Miracle Plays through a mysterious sixteenth-century chrysalis whereof little trace remains save the wondrous transformation, that sudden richness bodied forth from dullish *Gorboduc* to Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy,* ancestor to *Hamlet,* the sudden outburst of *Seneca* dramatizations combined with Lyly Euphuisticisms, leading to Marlowe and then Jonson and Shakespeare's historicals (and thence to the greater richness of the latter's tragedies and later comedies),—all this is set forth in a very fascinating, easily digestible and therefore memorable manner.

It appeared as a *Pelican* in 1948, and Messrs. Staples Ltd. have elected to republish this as a First Library Edition. How right they are, and lucky I (though Library reclaims the copies!). Consider the influence of the Court in freeing the Stage from the Puritans' stranglehold, and this "When Elizabeth began her reign she was only twenty-five. She enjoyed plays and pageantry and the courtly chivalry of the tilt-yard, all, if possible, at other people's expense . . . special private performances . . . Under Charles I's reign conditions had so developed that in 1634 his Queen could attend a play at Blackfriars."

"The spectator can identify himself with Hamlet and Antony, but he has to watch Coriolanus." Or of *The Tempest,* "it is never supremely successful on the modern stage, but infinitely full of suggestion and meaning, as if the whole of modern life were somehow symbolized within it." Right down to Maugham and "Bridie", Priestley and "Noel", everything and everyone but Fry, Professor Evans is as compellingly readable and delectable. "The Government . . . has taken active steps", there are great hopes for future developments. A book to read again, as will

ARTHUR VIVIAN.

Background to Sweden, by Terence Heywood (Constable, 25s.)
The Leaping Flame, by Celia Randall (The Poetry Lovers' Fellowship, 5s.)
The Two Natures, by Robert Waller (Hand and Flower Press, 1s.)
A Stranger Here, by Clare Cameron (BCM/Dayspring, 3s.)
The Singing Heart, by Maud Bosanquet (S.P.C.K., 3s. 6d.)

Some years ago, when coping with the thankless responsibilities of editorship, I became accustomed to receiving poems from Terence Heywood. Then, as now, I found him a poet of unusually fitful inspiration, liable to produce a cerebral cryptogram one moment and a quite lucid lyric the next.

In his latest book, describing his travels through Sweden, he has included a number of his poems, and since they have been written from experience they are largely understandable and make pleasant enough reading. But Mr. Heywood still conveys impressions that would read just as well if delivered in the prose form instead of being divided into more or less regular lines. Perhaps this might be said of many of to-day's poets.

Celia Randall is an entirely different type of poet, but is also continually comprehensible. She has an inexhaustable love for the eternal themes of earth and sky, and she uses words as they were meant to be used—simply, fondly, and often beautifully. So her book has probably not received many reviews.

Lush with lips and limbs, but not unmarked by original talent, *The Two Natures* is the fourth in the "Poems in Pamphlet" series. If 1s. cannot be spared to support this well produced little series, England's poets and their publishers had better give up all hope of Art and Gain ever being wedded.

Another poet of simple speech is Clare Cameron. Comparisons are to be avoided, but if I feel tempted to liken these poems' quality of thought and expression to that of other lyricists, I feel no less inclined to add that the sameness of clear, tranquil poetry is always welcome, wherever found.

For equal simplicity, though a more religious approach, Maud Bosanquet's collection is to be recommended.

JON WYNNE-TYSON.

THE LONELY MIRROR

OSWELL BLAKESTON

They put a mirror in his grave,
He could not sleep alone:
He lays his twin in white embrace,
The mirror is alone.

MORE POETRY ON RECORDS

Reviewed by JOHN HOLGATE

Recorded poetry, like broadcast poetry, can never please every listener. The microphone tends to reduce speakers to mere mouth-pieces and to inhibit them from that full vocal release which the living presence of an audience inspires. For whom is the recording artist speaking? The answer is for all and everyone and this puts the speaker in an immediate dilemma. We recently heard a recording of the late Canon Fleming as an illustration to Professor Rylands' brilliant Third Programme talk on the speaking of Hamlet. Canon Fleming's rendering of Poe's 'The Bells' incites listeners nowadays to laughter: it is so obviously calculated to inspire admiration of the speaker's astonishing vocal flexibility: it is a form of gymnastics which cannot be ignored, it so whirls and threshes. Laugh at it we may, but at least we have to admit that it is noticeable.

The recordings of poems by John Donne (Columbia DX 1729/1730) suffer greatly for lack of this quality of noticeability. They are dull and lifeless and very much in a take-it-or-leave-it manner. Anthony Quayle is the speaker and except in "The Sun Rising" and at the beginning of "The Anniversary" he does not catch the poet's quality nor the inner life of the poems. They drag along with monotonous pace and without attempt to display their tortuous content. If a recorded poem should have the power to hold the attention these cannot be said to succeed. "Batter my heart" emerges as only a minor conflagration.

Mr. Quayle's Shakespeare Sonnets on two records – Columbia DX 1773/1774 are of another sort. Here the matter seems to be so much better understood and each sonnet leaps to life and grows to its own particular point. Indeed, many of these sonnets are models in speaking this exacting poetic form and it is of especial interest to have them so well spoken by the Director of the Stratford Memorial Theatre.

Mr. Bernard Miles lends his unmistakable voice to Rudyard Kipling's "Danny Deever", the Sestina of the "Tramp Royal", and "The Long Trail". (Columbia DX 1687). The last poem is only moderately successful, its relentless rhythm leads Mr. Miles into a weary monotony of tone. But his "Danny Deever" is full of character and pathos and the "Sestina" wholly moving.

A second Kipling record is by Mr. Carleton Hobbs. The records he has made with Miss Hermione Hannen in the H.M.V. series "Poems for Young Children" show him to be a reader whose presentation of poems is consistently noticeable. He does not read like any intelligent Tom, Dick or Harry, but applies his sensibility and his vocal skill to capture and to keep our attention. There is no hit or miss with him. "The Dykes" is stirringly delivered (Columbia DX 1686) and "The Way through the Woods" on the reverse gives us Kipling at his lyrical best. "The Storm Cone" is read with elemental strength. In all these poems it is as though Mr. Hobbs forgot himself in his devotion to the poems. Not only this, but he is a practiced verse reader and knows exactly what he is about. His name may be only a little less famous than the other two, but it should be obvious to all hearers that he is the more to be trusted with verse. Not all well known actors can turn to verse and make it live. It is a special consideration within the actor's province and not all actors have had adequate experience of it.

Hardly to be considered in the same review are two records of Folk Songs (H.M.V. B 10110/10111). These are sung, unaccompanied, by Isla Cameron, whose voice is as simple and true as a good pipe. "The Turtle Dove" and "Lay the Bent to the Bonny Broom" on the first record demonstrate the felicity of the sung ballad with a refrain which echoes and haunts (but is often boring in its repetition when spoken). On the other record we are given "Died for Love", "The Queen's Maries", and "Queen Jane". They have been recorded under the auspices of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and are of great interest to all who look into the beginnings of our poetry and song. The particular quality of these records is that they suggest a woman singing whilst about her sweeping of the house, or in the evening by the firelight. It is perhaps then that these sad and even woeful songs would most fittingly find their moment.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

A champion has entered the lists to uphold the cause of a critic who has been perturbed by the protests of a lady (a climber, forsooth!) after several verbal kicks have been despatched in her direction.

This ridiculous scene appeals so greatly to the lady's sense of humour that her protests are turned to laughter.

She must, however, inform any possible spectators that with the exception of the two offending poems, "In Critical Vein", nearly all of her poems are lyrics or sonnets, also that the one called "Sincerity" is a satire attributed to a futurist poet, and not a personal confession.

Finally, as they are probably aware, the word "pœans" (Greek, Paian, a name of Apollo) should be spelt with œ diphthong not *æ*, an obvious misprint, and not a mistake in erudition.

I am, etc.,
EDITHA M. KELLY.

Sir,

I am writing to ask you if it would be possible to rectify a small error which occurred concerning the otherwise very nice review of Thomas Fassam's "My Tongue is My Own" in your September-October number. The price should be 8s. 6d., *not* 10s., as stated. The 1s. 6d. does make such a difference!

We are, etc.,
THE HAND AND FLOWER PRESS.

Sir,

We should be grateful if any of your readers who possess letters from the late James Stephens would send them to this office for possible use in a memoir. They would be copied and returned undamaged in a short time. It would be helpful if the envelopes were marked J.S.

Any assistance of this kind would be greatly appreciated by Mrs. Stephens and ourselves.

We are, etc.,
MACMILLAN & CO. LTD.

★

FOR A PATIENT WHO DIED OF CANCER

MARY DICKINSON

Now forth from the walls of your house
Of dependance and pain,
You have opened the door of the dark,
And found peace, like a garden, again.

STATE AID FOR LITERATURE

W. A. B. GARDENER

It was too good to last. The poet's eye
Must again heed the absolute patron's frown,
And help the poet's tongue work in the old way:
Flatter an emperor, fawn on a clown.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

SYLVIA DYE

How gracefully the Baroness allows
Her fur to droop from one patrician shoulder,
Time has preserved her figure well
In aspic—just the hardened eyes are older.
Smiling she views her tenantry and sits
Discreetly painted, prosperously gowned,
And in her armoured poise no chink reveals
The sweating labour of the social round.
Now she lifts up an eggshell cup and leans
Silken, smooth-breasted as a prudent pigeon
Forward, and tinkling with a silver spoon
Regrets the age's absence of religion.

THE SCULPTURE OF HENRY MOORE

A. C. JONES

Head and the heart in the hewing,
Skill in the touch,
Something convey to the viewing,
Something and such,
Manifest more in the doing
More than the much
More in the thinking ensuing
Hopeful to clutch
More from the hewn than the hewing;
Head and the heart in the viewing
Manifest much.

JUST A MINUTE!

DIANA DE VAUX

They do not rate these sixty seconds high,
Those Civil Servants smug in swivel chairs
With rubber bands around their paper lives.
A "minute" is a record on a file
Not reckoned in a world of overtime,
Of running for the 8.15 to town,
And filling in the hours till the 6.5
With tea at ten and lunch from twelve till three
With visits to the washroom in between . . .
Of being interrupted in their thoughts
Of gardening on week-end afternoons,
By something to be signed and put aside . . .
Of irritating queries on the phone . . .
They do not rate these sixty seconds high
That must make sixty minutes ere they count
As "Time", time-and-a quarter, half or double time
Sundays, Good Friday or on Christmas Day.
Dreaming of Leave (Sick, Annual or Privilege)
The Four Bank Holidays and Days-in-Lieu
They do not rate these Sixty Seconds high
That birth a genius or let one die.

EPITAPH ON THE TRAM

YORKE CROMPTON

Stand gravely, stranger, where the Tram has passed
And man's uplifted palm no longer hails;
Her trackless soul now currents through the vast,
Enfranchised from the rigour of the rails.

THE CYNIC

IAN BEITH

Words fell from his fingers like sixpences,
And his shrill silver-plated laughter
Clattered about your ears in mockery.
He paid and always got what he asked for,
Which was never what he wanted.

SABBAOTH

CHRISTOPHER LEE

I saw a little god on the common;
I took it home in my mind.
In the parlour I found another little god.
The Common God and the Parlour God quarrelled.
I can always find others.

CO-OPERATION

MARY FIELD

"Man won't stop fighting," said God.
"I fashioned him out of a sod:
I gave him my Staff and my Rod:
He's no better nor no worse than a clod"—
Said God.

"God won't start helping", said man.
"I'm doing the best that I can;
I'm trying to work out His plan:
After all, there are lots I'm no worse than—"
Said Man.

Said God—"We had better agree,
Just you pull alongside of Me.
There's not too much time left, you see
To get a good start of Eternity—"
Said He.

THE YOUNG WOMAN DEATH

ERIC NIXON

Time was a young woman at my gate.
"Wait," I said. She would not wait.

"Where are you going to?" I said, "Oh where?" I creid.
"To bring you an illness and more woe," she then replied.

"Oh bring me a bride and a kiss instead, bring me a bride instead."
"Oh what's the use of a bride to you, who will soon be dead?" she softly said
as she walked away. "I'll not die," I said, "not yet, not yet."
"Not yet. Not yet," she sighed, "Do you think I'm allowed to forget?"

THE CASUAL LOVERS

C. B. HUTCHINSON

Two casual light sort of friendly lovers
Met in a park one May
And expressed their affection for each other
In a casual light sort of friendly way.

On a casual light sort of friendly evening
A little after Autumn had begun,
The lovers first found the joys of teasing
And other light sorts of friendly fun:

Then a casual light sort of wintry midnight
When the nerves of both were a trifle hard hit,
He closed his hands around her windpipe tightly
And choked her in a sort of friendly fit.

Came a casual light sort of friendly sentence,
A brief pause for the appeal to be dismissed
And he swung in the air that last morning
Enveloped in a sort of friendly mist.

THE POETRY SOCIETY AND THE B.B.C.

A CORRESPONDENCE, 1950–1951

The following schedule is a selection covering the main heads of correspondence which took place between the President of the Poetry Society and various officials of the B.B.C., as part of an attempt to establish some basis of co-operation between the Society and the Corporation.

After some opening correspondence of a general character, a rather long memorandum was submitted to the B.B.C. detailing the activities of the Society and the various points in which it was believed that our experience might assist the B.B.C. in the better presentation of poetry.

This letter brought a reply from the Director of Home Programmes and that letter is published first below.

1. *The Director of Home Programmes B.B.C., to the President of the Poetry Society.*

3rd March, 1950

Dear Sir,

I have now been able to consider your letter of 22nd February. I am sure you would want me to say frankly that I do not feel that it provides an appropriate basis for discussion between your Society and the B.B.C. The memo accompanying your letter lists no less than thirty points dealing with the work of the B.B.C. and many of them are points of detail which fall entirely within the B.B.C.'s sphere of responsibility and do not seem to constitute a basis for discussion about possible co-operation between your Society and the B.B.C.

If, however, your Society is still anxious for a discussion, I suggest that it should be on the basis of half-a-dozen or so general points, or points of principle, which might offer some prospect of a fruitful discussion.

Since we last exchanged letters there has, as you know, been a development in the field of poetry on the initiative of the Arts Council, and it seems to us that this may possibly be a more effective channel for discussing the subject than the proposed deputation.

Yours faithfully,

B. E. Nicolls.

2. *The President of the Poetry Society, to the Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C.*

13th March, 1950

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of 3rd March, and am sorry if our suggested programme was too wide in extent. It was intended only to serve as a possible basis of discussion, and we felt perhaps you would select such points as might interest you.

It may clear away a possible misconception in this matter if I say now frankly, that I do not envisage any benefit either to the B.B.C. or to the Poetry Society from the proposed discussion. The benefit, if it comes, will be to that cause which has been the mainspring of the activities of our Society for over 40 years: the increasing of a love of poetry and its appreciation among as many people as possible.

While the main function of the Corporation may be to provide acceptable programmes, I feel that it is not unaware of ideals which lie beyond circulation figures; and I suggest that if in poetry those ideals are part of your landscape—as I know they are—the cause of poetry might be served by your discussing them with a Society to whom they are paramount.

I know the development you mention in your last paragraph. It is part of the endeavour to bring poetry on the scene again with a true sense of the greatness of her part. But I do

not know how we can discuss things with you through the Arts Council, with whom our sole connection is that I attended the meetings devoted to considering this subject.

If you wish to see us we are still gladly at your service.

Yours faithfully,

T. W. Ramsey.

3. *The Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C., to the President of the Poetry Society*

6th April, 1950

Dear Mr. Ramsey,

I am sorry to have been so long in replying to your letter of 13th March, but an extra load of work in connection with the Beveridge Committee has prevented me from dealing with my ordinary correspondence over the last two or three weeks.

I think the best thing in the circumstances would be for us to meet. If you would agree to come here some time I could arrange for some of the appropriate officials to have a talk with you. I feel somehow that this would be better than a formal deputation. Would you care to ring up my secretary, and make an appointment?

Yours sincerely,

B. E. Nicolls.

4. *Memorandum from the President of the Poetry Society, to Poetry Society General Council regarding B.B.C.*

19th May, 1950

Mr. B. E. Nicolls asks us to nominate a member of the Council as liaison officer with the B.B.C. and to notify him when this is done. Purpose: to maintain contact with Mr. Harman Grisewood (Third Programme: Poetry) and suitable officials on Home and Light to be nominated. Function: advisory and consultative.

5. *The President of the Poetry Society, to the Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C.*

14th June, 1950

Dear Mr. Nicolls,

You will remember that I called upon you on 19th May and had a conversation with you and with Mr. Harman Grisewood. You suggested then that the Poetry Society should appoint a representative to act as a kind of liaison officer between the Society and the B.B.C. for purposes of discussion and you were kind enough to offer to make the necessary introductions when such an officer had been appointed.

The Poetry Society has asked me to undertake this duty on its behalf and I have accepted and shall look forward therefore, to hearing from you again in due course.

Yours sincerely,

T. W. Ramsey.

6. *The Director of Home Programmes, to the President of the Poetry Society.*

23rd June, 1950

Dear Mr. Ramsey,

Thank you for your letter of 14th June. I am glad that the Society has asked you to undertake the duty of liaison with the B.B.C. and I will now proceed to fulfil my promise of introducing you to the Controller of the Light Programme, with a view to your discussing the popularisation of poetry. Unfortunately I am off for my holiday in a week's time, and Mr. Chalmers, the Controller, is away at this moment, so I am afraid I must leave the introduction until my return at the beginning of August.

Yours sincerely,

B. E. Nicolls.

7. NOTES ON INCREASING THE POPULAR DEMAND FOR POETRY VIA B.B.C. AND POETRY SOCIETY

August, 1950

The matter under consideration falls into two parts:

(a) How best to popularize poetry (i.e. increase the size of the audience).
(b) In what way that end can be served by a liaison between the B.B.C. and the Poetry Society.

As regards (a) the following general suggestions are made:

(1) Increase the time allotted to poetry, which at present forms so small a percentage of the whole broadcast field.
(2) Give a portion of this time at least to peak hour listening periods i.e. abandon the present habit of relegating poetry to odd corners of the programmes.
(3) Make a feature of a children's Poetry programme—possibly in conjunction with the Poetry Society's competitions for children's verse-writing.
(4) Avoid all verse-speakers with a mournful, over-earnest or pedantic style of delivery—some we hear at present are good, but not all of them. And in general the men are better than the women, a condition by no means inevitable.
(5) Make use of programmes with specialized appeal in terms of places or occupations (e.g. poems by miners, poetry of the West Country and so on). A regular series has cumulative power and is more valuable than isolated programmes.
(6) Let well-known personalities in various walks of life give personal choice programmes. The Wilfred Pickles programmes were an outstanding success in this vein.
(7) Minimize modern poetry, at least of the obscure and difficult type, which is totally unsuited for absorption by the ear. And don't be afraid of the hackneyed favourites. They wear well and a good reader always makes them sound fresh.
(8) In this connection a simple, one-syllable word talk on modern poetry by a genuine and mature expert might be valuable.
(9) It might be well to compare or at least annotate readings, especially to illustrate the relation between various pieces in a properly blended programme.
(10) From the entertainment point of view, which is of paramount importance, there is much to be said for extreme variety in one programme, that is in say, half-an-hour, to try to cater for as many tastes as possible. This would be done perhaps in 10 per cent. of programmes.
(11) From the educational standpoint, a set of programmes on the origins, technique, content and intentions of poetry might be valuable; or a series of talks on poetic appreciation, called for example, "The Adventure of Poetry".
(12) The first few readings of a series should be kept on as simple a line as possible—narrative poetry, ballads and lighter lyrics—not despising even Hiawatha and the Lays of Ancient Rome, or similar childhood memories.
(13) The use of a poem instead of music to fill in an interval between programmes, or to introduce or close a programme.
(14) Broadcast talk between a well-known poet and the man in the street about poetry and its relation to ordinary life.
(15) Readings by poets themselves, but not the more recondite ones—at least at first.
(16) As regards (b) the extent of useful liaison which can be made depends largely on how much administrative time the B.B.C. is prepared to devote to this problem. If they are prepared to set up a small panel to give it the fullest possible attention, the obvious suggestion is that two or three members of the Council of the Poetry Society might be co-opted on to that panel in an advisory capacity; I know they would willingly give their services.

I believe that among the Gold Medallists of the Society we have some verse

speakers who would be worth hearing on the air. I suggest that our Gold Medallists should receive an audition for this purpose as a matter of routine. We do not award more than one or two medals per year. An occasional broadcast arranged and put over by the Society itself might make a change from ordinary practice; or a programme devoted to problems of poetry on the lines of a Brains Trust or Any Questions could be arranged by us.

As regards new verse a panel of perhaps six, selected from the B.B.C. and the Poetry Society might sift and judge entries received for this purpose with a view to broadcast perhaps once a week in the Home or Light Service at not too late an hour. This might give new and promising work the opportunity of an audience which publishers to-day are chary of giving it. At the conclusion of such a series, some sort of award for the three best poems might be given.

Lastly it is in giving permanence to the rather diffuse and transitory sense of pleasure derived from words already vanishing into echo that the Poetry Society could perform its most useful and appropriate function. It should be possible to devise some mechanism by which those who write to the B.B.C. and express their appreciation of the poetry programme could be put in touch with the Society, and so be encouraged to continue that active interest in poetry which it is the primary aim of the Society to foster. There would then be less tendency for them to drift away from the first enthusiasm, and a regular core of listeners to poetry programmes would gradually be established.

I append a list of the names of our General Council, many of whom have assisted me with advice and suggestions in preparing these preliminary suggestions.

8. *Note by the President of the Poetry Society.*

The above exchange of letters resulted in my meeting the Controller of Light Programmes, Mr. T. W. Chalmers, and I had a number of interviews with him of a very satisfactory nature handing him the Memorandum (here numbered Document 7); I think that a fair degree of collaboration would have resulted from these meetings, but unfortunately very soon after this, Mr. Chalmers was transferred to a position abroad.

9. *The President of the Poetry Society, to the Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C.*

21st September, 1950

Dear Mr. Nicolls,

I have now had several most enjoyable meetings with Mr. Chalmers and I am hoping that some progress has been made in this direction.

I handed him a copy of the enclosed memorandum (Document 7, here printed) but thought that you also should have a copy of it, in view of the fact that the points raised concern other programmes beside the Light Programme. I hope that you will find at least some of these points of interest, and we may have in them, a possible basis for future discussion.

Yours sincerely,
T. W. Ramsey.

10. *The Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C., to the President of the Poetry Society.*

22nd September, 1950

Dear Mr. Ramsey,

Thank you very much for your letter of 21st September. I am glad that you have had some enjoyable talks with Mr. Chalmers. I am sure that that is the best way of making progress from your point of view.

The memo enclosed with your letter (Document 7, here printed) is a very interesting one, and I will have it studied by those concerned.

Yours sincerely,
B. E. Nicolls.

11. *The President of the Poetry Society, to the Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C.*

20th January, 1951

Dear Mr. Nicolls,

May I refer now to your letter of 22nd September. I feel that after four months the people who are studying it (Document 7, here printed) should have come to some sort of conclusion and I am wondering if you can tell me what that conclusion is.

If there is anything further we can give you in the way of information you know that I should be most pleased to see either you or any of your assistants at any time.

Yours sincerely,

T. W. Ramsey.

12. *The Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C., to the President of the Poetry Society.*

13th February, 1951

Dear Mr. Ramsey,

My routine activities have been much delayed by work in connection with the issue of the Beveridge Report, and that is the reason for my seeming discourtesy in not replying earlier to your letter of 20th January. I have now, however, had a full discussion of your letter with our Programme Controllers, and in particular Mr. Kenneth Adam, the new Controller of the Light Programme, who has inherited Mr. Chalmers' interest in the matter.

As you know, we feel tremendously sympathetic towards the objects of your Society and we have over the years continuously fought a very hard battle, and I hope not a losing one, in defence of poetry. At the moment, for instance, the Light Programme has just made arrangements for a new series with Wilfred Pickles called "The Pleasure is Mine", and as you know, his previous activities at the microphone have led to the publication of an anthology of poetry and other useful by-products.

I must be frank, however, and say that we are not prepared to extend co-operation between us to the extent that your Society apparently envisages. We would readily admit that many of the points in your notes of August 1950 are valid and useful, and we are always glad to receive any concrete suggestions for programme items. But I would not like to pretend that we feel that we can conduct our poetry programmes on the basis implied in your correspondence with us. It is perhaps difficult for anyone outside the B.B.C. to realise the constant pressure of our work, the tyranny of our daily time-table, and our consequent anxiety to keep the lines of our work as simple and clear as possible.

I hope that your Society will be able to understand our attitude and will not misinterpret it.

Yours sincerely,

B. E. Nicolls.

13. *The President of the Poetry Society, to the Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C.*

27th February, 1951

Dear Mr. Nicolls,

I have your letter of 13th February and fully appreciate all that you say. I have no doubt that the duties both of yourself and your various assistants are so heavy that it is impossible for you to envisage any sort of close co-operation with any outside body. Nevertheless I do still feel that there are points in the memorandum I sent you which are worthy of a little more serious consideration and I would not like to think that you are unwilling or unable to take any advantage at all of such help as the Society could give in this matter.

I would particularly refer to the choice of verse-speakers and would say frankly that this is a point in which your programmes are still susceptible of improvement, and I know very well that I am not alone in that opinion. I do not know how your verse-speakers are

chosen but I do know that very often verse speakers of my acquaintance (some who hold our Gold Medal and some who do not) apply in vain for an audition. The reply seems to be in general, that you have a very long waiting list. Might I suggest that the panel or the official, whoever it is that chooses your verse-speakers should at least give an audition to speakers who have reached such a high standard as the Gold Medal of the Poetry Society implies. I think from this course, both the B.B.C. and the general listening public could hardly fail to gain to some extent.

I have mentioned one point in my memorandum; there are others. I wonder, apart from the question of verse-speakers to what extent co-operation between us may be possible.

Yours sincerely,

T. W. Ramsey.

14. *The Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C., to the President of the Poetry Society.*

14th March, 1951

Dear Mr. Ramsey,

Thank you for your letter of 27th February. I have discussed it with my colleagues and none of us can quite see why there should be any difficulty in your gold medallists, etc., obtaining an audition. Incidentally, I think I am right in saying that the Third Programme has broadcast your gold medallist finals, or whatever the right term is, in the past year or two, which is one way of bringing them before the public. The other way is for them or you to get in touch with Mr. Geoffrey Bridson, Assistant Head of our Features Department here, who does arrange poetry auditions about once a quarter. A good many of the candidates are accepted at the auditions, but I am afraid this does not mean that they are likely to be asked to broadcast, as poetry is so often handled in ways which make the use of a well-known actor or actress desirable, if only from the point of view of attracting the public.

I think, therefore, your best practical step is to get in touch with Mr. Bridson.

Yours sincerely,

B. E. Nicolls.

15. *The President of the Poetry Society, to the Director of Home Programmes, B.B.C.*

17th April, 1951

Dear Mr. Nicolls,

I have your letter of 14th March and it seems rather a pity if all that we have prepared is to be whittled down to the one point of whether or not our Gold Medallists are to have an audition. This as you will realise is only a small part of our suggestions. I quite realise that we cannot force your hand with the B.B.C. and it seems that we have done all that we can.

I propose to clarify the matter with Members of the Society by publishing our correspondence in *The Poetry Review*.

Yours sincerely,

T. W. Ramsey.

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT

(New Series: No. 9)

By LEIGH HENRY

Entries generally had quality. The nostalgic Mabinogion spirit of Enid Madoc-Jones' "Princess and the Sycamore Seed" is marred by disturbing quotes—"Make haste"; " 'And of hope' thought Branwen". Some obscurities detract from fantasy-atmosphere and filigree form in W. J. Sedergreen's "Summer Evening". Nearing Emily Dickenson's touching simplicity, Eva Nendick's "Creation" slips from direct naturalness in its third line. A. E. Dodd's "Fugue" modulates impressively, in spite of some slightly americanese verbiage—"doctrinally"; "now terminant"; "empty alluvial victory", narrowing its visionary breadth. Colourful imagination fills Michael Kelly's "St-Martin's Summer"; but stereotyped "thee" and "thou" spoil its natural idiom. Slight mannerisms blur poignantly-moving introspective vision, alike in Margaret C. Gibbins' "Chorus without Music" and Evelyn Wilson's "Lost Love". The award is divided. Graphic visual perception informed by the spirit of place, manifest in clear-patterned imagery to a sensitively personal consciousness, distinguishes Lois Vaughan Thomas'

PLACE DE LA CONCORDE

A vastness of pale pavement, utterly flat,
Save here and there—
Straight fountains jetting silver lines;
Thin obelisks and lamp-posts;
Smug palaces squatting behind walls.
A monochrome of space, utterly grey,
Save here and there—
The shot-silk glint of cars;
The tourist's too-new scarf;
A red-blue-yellow blur of flowerstalls.
A cubist's study in angles, utterly square,
Save here and there—
The bowed Rivoli arches;
Hunched newsvendors slumping into sleep;
And the great round swing of a sky set over a city.

Imagery become symbolic to a haunted mind caught-away into spell-bound regions of spiritual questing, creates Dorothy Spring's wistful dream-vista,

THE DOOR IN THE ROCK

Still my sleeping mind comes back
To the doorway in the rock.

Harebells hanging from the dim
Limestone cliffs above the stream,

Trailing ivy and deep grass,
By the stream too swift to cross;

And upon the farther shore,
Crumbling, empty-windowed, bare

Spectre of a house, which none
Visits but the owl alone;

And the pale cliff curving back,
And a doorway in the rock.

Sunshine brightly through the land,
Path be clear for me to find,

Stream run not too deep and fast,
For I come to lay my ghost.

POETRY AND MUSIC: THE TALIESIN P.M.G.

The Taliesin Poetry and Music Group meets fortnightly at Friends' House, Euston Road, with a modest subscription membership. As the organisers feel that more than 12 or 15 minutes of poetry reading at a time strains the attention of most people, they make a practice of having either a musical item or a break at least every quarter of an hour, sometimes oftener. Most of the items, both poetry and music are either of contemporary interest or give a new slant on older work. Sometimes poets read their own work, sometimes they are read by others. Amongst those who have read recently are James Kirkup, recently elected to a Fellowship at Leeds University, John Gawsworth, editor of *The Poetry Review*, Clifford Dyment, W. R. Rodgers, Roy Campbell, and Randall Swingler. Special features have included Welsh, Pakistani, Chinese and Anglo-Saxon poetry readings. Last summer Ernest Milton and others read Sidney Keyes' play *Minos of Crete*, only once performed in England, and there was an evening of Dante translations, mainly by the President of the Poetry Society, T. W. Ramsey. A recital of operatic arias and songs, together with a dramatic reading of Schiller's *Mary Stuart* was recently given by Mary Cromwell and Mary Grew. Musical items have included works by figures as varied as Joseph Gibbs and Benjamin Britten; English recorder music, French historic songs by Peter Upcher the *diseur*, and songs by the Zulu singer, John Ngcobo.

Ross Nichols.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE POETRY SOCIETY : LECTURES

It has been suggested at the General Executive Council to invite any persons interested and willing to become lecturers to communicate direct with the Secretary, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

CENTRES

THE BATH POETRY CLUB

Enquiries to: James Angell, Esq., Pucklewood, Lumpley-Stoke, Nr. Bath, Somerset.

THE BOSTON POETRY CENTRE

Meetings held monthly. Full details from : Miss Blanche T. Bigelow, 163 Eliot Street Milton 87, Mass.

THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs. T. Weston Ramsey, 89 Poplar Avenue, Hove.

Fixtures every third Saturday in the month at the Glenside Hotel, 65 Grand Parade, Brighton. Readings at 3.15 until 5.30 p.m. Tudor Café attached. Refreshments if desired.

President: Rev. F. Pratt Green, 25 West Drive, Brighton 7.

THE BRONDESBURY POETRY CENTRE

Meetings are held on the first Sunday in each month at 4 p.m. Enquiries should be sent to: Miss Silvia Newton, L.R.A.M. (Eloc.), 1 Mowbray Road, Brondesbury, N.W.6. Tel: WIL 6405.

THE CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE

(Affiliated to the Poetry Society. Formed 1946)

President: Dame Sybil Thorndike

Vice-President: Miss Margaret Rawlings

To celebrate the fifth anniversary of its inauguration the Circle revived the first Reading given in December 1946 by the founders.

This was held as before, at 314A, Kings Road, Chelsea, S.W.3. the home of the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. George Wood. The Hon. Secretary Mr. John Carroll opened the meeting with a short account of how the Circle started. The readers in the programme from various English poets that followed were all founder members of the Committee including Miss Mary Ainsworth, Miss Dorothy Casey, Miss Mary Martin, Mr. John Carroll, Mr. George Wood.

Details of Circle Readings can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, 5 Redesdale Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

THE EALING POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: The Secretary, 3 Grafton Road, Acton, W.3.

THE FLORIDA POETRY CENTRES

(Formed 1920)

President General:

Marie Tello Phillips,
6427 Darlington Rd.,
Pittsburgh 17, Pa., U.S.A.

THE GUILDFORD POETRY CENTRE

Details of meetings may be obtained from The Centre Secretary, Mrs. F. E. Coker, 20 Litchfield Way, Guildford, Surrey.

THE HAMPSTEAD POETRY CENTRE (1909)

Meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays in each month at 8-9.30 p.m., at 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3

THE LEEDS POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: Peter Bailey, 49 Cross Flatts Parade, Beeston, Leeds, 11.

THE LEWES POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to the Secretary and Treasurer: G. C. Price, 22 Sutton Road, Seaford, Sussex.

Meetings are held in the Friends Meeting House, Lewes.

THE MANCHESTER POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to the Secretary: Mrs. B. Sterling, 25 June Street, Manchester 13. Meetings are held at the Midland Hotel, the third Wednesday in each month at 6.30 p.m.

THE MONROE (LOUISIANA) POETRY CENTRE

Mrs. James McCampbell Russell of 1304 Emerson Avenue, Monroe, Louisiana, is inaugurating a Centre of The Poetry Society and will be pleased to hear from anyone interested.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: Miss H. Haddock, 18 Ashley Gardens, Belfast.

This energetic Centre has recently published its Eighth Annual Report (Session 1950/1951), a valuable record.

THE NOTTINGHAM POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: Lake Aske, Esq., 281 Wilford Lane, Nottingham.

THE REIGATE POETRY CENTRE

Details of Meetings may be obtained from the Centre Secretary, Mrs. M. A. Hicks, The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate.

THE ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.) CENTRE
(Formed 1946)

Members and potential members are invited to communicate with the President, Helen T. Douglas Robinson, 815 Jackson Street North, St. Petersburg 6, Florida. The Centre seeks to promote production of the best in poetry.

SHEFFIELD POETRY CLUB

Enquiries should be sent to: Miss F. G. Stimpson, 23 Silver Hill Road, Sheffield, 11.

THE SOUTHAMPTON POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to: Miss Joy Brider, 9 Archers Road, Southampton.

THE STROUD CENTRE

For particulars of Membership, please apply to the Hon. Secretary of the Stroud Poetry Centre, Miss Mary Martyn, Sunfold, Rodborough Common, near Stroud.

THE WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE POETRY CENTRE

President: Wilfrid Gibson, Esq.
Enquiries should be sent to: Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens, 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey.

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

ORIOLE : POETS' GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

Dedicated to furthering the work of active poets within the Society, the Oriole Group meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry". All interested are invited to communicate with me at The Well House, Ewell, Surrey. Leigh Henry.

THE POETRY SOCIETY S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines, continually increases.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the final award for success.

General regulations governing these auditions may be obtained on application to The Registrar, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, with whom arrangements can be made for auditions for schools, colleges, or private individuals.

COMPETITIONS

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1952

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editor, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

Closing date is 31st December, 1952.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above bi-monthly competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be February 15th, 1952.

THE HOWARD PARSONS EPIGRAM COMPETITION: 1952

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, to reach here not later than

SELECTED POEMS

OLD AND NEW

By Gilbert Thomas

Author of *William Cowper and the Eighteenth Century, etc., etc.*

This volume, long overdue, contains a selection from the poems of forty years, including many now assembled for the first time. Leading critics and poets have acclaimed it as giving fresh vitality to traditional forms and to the enduring values underlying all change, and have declared some of it to be "permanent".

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"*The Singing Heart* . . . Colour and life and the sweetness of the good earth are all in this little book, as the reflection of the greater joys beyond" – *Wiltshire Gazette*

Also

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Advance Announcement

The APOLLO Anthology

Official Anthology of the Apollo Society with forewords by

C. DAY LEWIS & PEGGY ASHCROFT

A new poetry anthology selected for reading and recitation. These groups that the Apollo Society have found by practice to be most successful. Ordinary cloth edition 12s. 6d. BUT if you, your society or school could use a strong paper-bound edition at 6s., please fill in form below now.

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Please send me full details of the Apollo Anthology. I might use. . . . copies of the 6s. edition.

MACGIBBON & KEE

2 Guilford Place

London, W.C.1

1st March, 1952. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1952

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fourth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10 may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator; the winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1952. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE POETRY SOCIETY JUNIOR VERSE COMPETITION

The Poetry Society have pleasure in announcing the next annual Junior Verse Competition. Schools throughout the country are invited to co-operate in submitting the work of their pupils.

The Competition will be divided into two classes:

(*a*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age up to thirteen years last birthday. There will be a book prize inscribed by the Poetry Society.

(*b*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, aged from fourteen to seventeen years last birthday. There will be a book prize, inscribed by the Poetry Society and four additional prizes of one year's Membership to the Poetry Society.

The poem may be on any subject. Closing date, 30th June, 1952. Entries to be addressed to: The Junior Verse Competition, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear the names and addresses of competitors and copies should be retained as these cannot be returned.

SUBMISSIONS TO THE EDITOR

Manuscripts may be submitted to the Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, for consideration in the ordinary way apart from entries for competitions. Such MSS. should be typewritten, or if this is impossible, printed legibly, and if their return is desired must be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope. The Editor can accept no responsibility for the safey of MSS. although every care will be taken to ensure this. Acceptance will not imply immediate publication; payment will be made upon publication.

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LESLIE PAUL

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'Exile' is the first collection of Leslie Paul's poems to be published in 20 years. The poems reveal the author's gradual development as a poet, and throw light also upon the prose works by which he has made his name.

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THE POETRY SOCIETY : JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

Every boy and girl under eighteen years of age is now entitled to become a Junior Member of the Poetry Society.

Every junior member will enjoy the privileges of an ordinary member but, instead of *The Poetry Review,* will receive each quarter, post free, a special magazine called *The Voice of Youth.*

The Voice of Youth is the only magazine in the country addressed solely to all under eighteen, and devoted wholly to poetry. There are special articles about the way poets write, the thrill of finding their meaning, how poetry grew from ballad songs, the ways in which poets of to-day are seeking to find new ways to express themselves, the adventure of selecting and manipulating words to create a poem, the way to use the human voice to convey the true inner meaning of poetry, and so on.

There are competitions in every issue, the opportunity of getting one's special efforts criticised by experts. A part is always devoted to printing the best that is written by the junior members themselves.

Books and gramophone records will be reviewed. Queries will be answered and an open correspondence column will be there for the readers to give their own views.

The Poetry Society is the largest fellowship of poetry lovers in the world and for over forty years, has played a great part in maintaining the strength and purity of this our English heritage.

YOU, if under 18, have the opportunity of joining as a Junior Member.

You can do so quite easily by completing the form below.

I,..... Date of Birth.....
Name in Block Letters.

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